

Message Text

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ACTION ARA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 AID-05 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-02

INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15

DHA-02 /058 W

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R 181723Z SEP 75

FM AMEMBASSY MANAGUA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 7994

INFO AMEMBASSY GUATEMALA

AMEMBASSY PANAMA

AMEMBASSY SAN JOSE

AMEMBASSY SAN SALVADOR

AMEMBASSY TEGUCIGALPA

USIA WASHDC

C O N F I D E N T I A L MANAGUA 3619

EO 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT NU

SUBJ: LA PRENSA FORCED TO PRINT RYAN NOTE

REF: MANAGUA 3483

1. AFTER RESISTING FOR NEARLY A WEEK, LA PRENSA WAS FORCED TO PUBLISH ON SEPTEMBER 12 A GON OFFICIAL COMMUNIQUE CONTAINING THE DEPARTMENT'S DIPLOMATIC NOTE OF SEPT 5 SIGNED BY ARA DEPUTY ASST. SECRETARY HEWSON RYAN TO NICARAGUAN AMBASSADOR SEVILLA SACASA CONCERNING THE JACK ANDERSON ARTICLES. THE VERSION PUBLISHED BY LA PRENSA INCLUDED A REVISED TRANSLATION WHICH RESTORED THE MISSING WORD "PRESENT" IN THE PHRASE "...AID HAS NO PRESENT CLAIMS AGAINST ANY AGENCY OF THE GOVERNMENT OF NICARAGUA." LA PRENSA PUBLISHER PEDRO JOAQUIN CHAMORRO HAD POINTED THIS ERROR OUT TO THE GON AND WAS THUS ABLE TO CLAIM A TINY CONCESSION FROM THE GON'S ORIGINAL DEMAND. THE COMMUNIQUE WAS CARRIED RATHER INCONSPICUOUSLY AT THE BOTTOM OF THE SECOND PAGE, WHICH MIGHT BE INTERPRETED AS ANOTHER CONCESSION TO CHAMORRO'S STUBBORNESS IN THE MATTER.

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2. CHAMORRO SENT A LETTER TO MINISTER OF GOVERNMENT J. ANTONIO MORA ON THE DAY OF PUBLICATION FORMALLY REGISTERING HIS PROTEST AT BEING FORCED TO PRINT THE COMMUNIQUE. HE CLAIMED THAT EVEN UNDER THE CENSORSHIP PROVISIONS OF MARTIAL LAW, THE GON'S WAS ONLY EMPOWERED TO EXCLUDE ITEMS AND NOT TO "...FORCE CITIZENS TO SAY, PRINT OR THINK WHAT THE GOVERNMENT THINKS, OR WHAT THE GOVERNMENT OF THE UNITED STATES THINKS." BY THIS ACT, HE CHARGED THE GON WITH ENTERING INTO A NEW TOTALITARIAN PHASE, WHICH PLACES IT AMONG THOSE LATIN AMERICAN COUNTRIES WHO MOST VIOLATE HUMAN RIGHTS. CHAMORRO CONCLUDED THE LETTER STATING, "I WOULD LIKE TO POINT OUT THAT IT WOULD BE SHAMEFUL FOR THE U.S. AUTHORS OF THE NOTE TO KNOW HOW THE NICARAGUAN GOVERNMENT UTILIZED THE OFFICIAL DOCUMENTS OF A COUNTRY WHERE FOR 200 YEARS, AND BY EXPRESS MANDATE OF THE FIRST AMENDMENT OF ITS OWN CONSTITUTION, IS PROHIBITED FROM FORCING OTHERS TO SAY WHAT THEY DO NOT WANT TO SAY, TO THINK THAT WHICH THEY DO NOT WANT TO THINK AND TO KEEP THEIR OWN OPINIONS IN RESERVE."

3. COMMENT: CHAMORRO'S REMARKS ABOUT THE UNITED STATES SHOULD BE CONSTRUED AS AN EFFORT TO EMBARRASS SOMOZA RATHER THAN A CRITICISM OF THE U.S. HE WAS AWARE OF THE AMBASSADOR'S EXPRESSION OF CONCERN TO PRESIDENTIAL PRESS SECRETARY IVAN OSORIO ON THIS MATTER AND APPRECIATED THE GESTURE. AS PART OF A COMPROMISE PROPOSAL AT ONE POINT, HE WAS EVEN DISPOSED TO PRINT VOLUNTARILY AN EMBASSY PRESS RELEASE CONTAINING THE EXCHANGE OF DIPLOMATIC NOTES, A SOLUTION REJECTED BY HARDLINERS IN THE GON WHO WERE DETERMINED TO WIN A TEST OF STRENGTH (ACCORDING TO OSORIO). WITH DUE ALLOWANCE FOR HIS PARTISAN BIAS, CHAMORRO, IN CHARGING THE REGIME WITH MOVING TOWARD A MORE TOTALITARIAN CONFIGURATION WITH THIS MOVE, REFLECTS A MORE GENERALIZED VIEWPOINT OF THOSE INCREASINGLY CONCERNED WITH THE NEARLY COMPLETE SUPPRESSION IN THE PAST SEVERAL WEEKS OF MASS MEDIA CRITICISMS OF THE REGIME.
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